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THE POET AND THE COMPOSER.

BY E. T. A. HOFFMAN.

[Continued from page 214.]

Ferdinand. But Mozart. . . ?

Ludwig. He chose only truly musical poems for his classic operas, however paradox this assertion may sound. But, not to digress, I think, it might be very precisely defined what subject would be good for an opera; so much so that no poet need be afraid of erring.

Ferdinand. I confess I never have much thought of it, and wanting entirely in musical knowledge, I could hardly have come to any satisfactory conclusion.

Ludwig. If you understand by musical knowledge, the science of the theory of music, you can dispense with that; it is not necessary to be able to judge of the wants of the composer. For without it you may have a much better insight into the whole nature of the art, than many a composer, who, working in the sweat of his brow through the whole labyrinth of the school, adores the dead rule as the living spirit, and who is by this idolatry cheated out of the bliss of the higher regions.

Ferdinand. And you think the poet may penetrate into the true

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nature of music without having by the school received the lower orders.

Ludwig. Certainly! Yes, in that distant realm, from which so often strange forebodings are sent, and wonderful voices call to us, waking all those sounds that slept within the oppressed breast, and that now joyously and cheerfully shoot forth as in fiery beams, opening to us the happiness of paradise, there are poets and composers, the intimately connected members of our church; for the mystery of word and tone is the same, and revealed to them by the same highest consecration.

Ferdinand. Now I hear my dear Ludwig striving to comprise the mysterious nature of art in deep sentences, and indeed I see already the distance narrowed, that seemed to separate the poet from the musician.

Ludwig. Let me attempt to give my opinion on the true nature of the opera. In few words: The true opera appears to be only that in which the music springs immediately from the poem, as its necessary offspring.

Ferdinand. I confess I do not fully understand you.

Ludwig. Is not music the mysterious language of a land of spirits, whose wonderful accents resound in our own breasts, and awaken a higher, more intense life? All our passions contend with each other in brilliant array, and are dissolved into an unspeakable longing, which fills our bosoms. This is the inexplicable effect of instrumental music. But now music is wanted to step forward into life, it must seize upon its events, and, adorning word and deed, speak of definite passions and actions. But can you talk in high and glorious words of what is common? Can music proclaim anything else, but the wonders of that land, from which its tones sound into our bosoms? The poet must aim at a bold flight into that distant realm of romance; there he will find what is wonderful, which he must carry into life, lively and shining in bright colors. He must make us willingly believe in it, nay, he must make us wander, as in a happy dream, snatched away from poor every day life, in the flowery walks of that romantic land, and understand its language, the word gaining life in music.

Ferdinand. Then you prefer exclusively the romantic opera, with its fays, spirits, and wonders.

Ludwig. I certainly think the romantic the only true opera, for only in the realms of romance is music at home. You will, however,

not doubt, that I heartily despise those miserable productions, in which flat, stale ghosts, without anything spiritual, appear, and wonders are heaped upon wonders, without cause or effect, merely to gratify the eyes of an idle public. A truly romantic opera can only be written by an inspired poet of true genius : for he alone can start the wonderful apparitions of the land of spirits into life ; on his wings we lift ourselves, and pass that abyss which separated us from it, and having become familiar in this strange land, we believe in its wonders, which happen visibly as necessary consequences of the agency of higher natures upon our whole being, and develop all those grand, exciting situations, that fill our hearts now with fright and horror, and then with highest delight. It is, in one word, the charm of poetic truth, which the poet, who gives us a representation of the wonderful, must possess ; for this truth alone can transport us to utter forgetfulness of ourselves ; while a merely whimsical succession of sorceries or wonders, without any other object than to tease the Pagliasso in esquire's disguise, as is the case in many productions of this kind, will leave us always cold and without interest. Thus, my friend, in the opera, the influence of higher natures upon us is to be shown visibly, and thus a romantic life is to be developed before our eyes, in which even language is to be ennobled, or rather taken from that distant realm, that is language is music, song, nay, even action and situations, dressed in powerful sounds, take more powerfully hold of us. Thus, as I said before, the music must immediately and necessarily find its origin in the poetry.

Ferdinand. I understand you now fully, and think of Ariosto and Tasso ; but I conceive it to be a difficult task, to write the musical drama according to your requisites.

Ludwig. It can be only the work of a man of genius, of a truly romantic poet. Think of the great Gozzi. In his romantic dramas he has exactly fulfilled what I want of the poet of an opera, and I wonder that this rich source of beautiful opera subjects has hitherto not been more used.

Ferdinand. I confess, when I read Gozzi's works, some years ago, I was much interested in them, yet I have, of course, not looked at them in this point of view.

Ludwig. One of his most beautiful dramas is undoubtedly "The Raven." Millo, king of Frattombrosa, is fond of nothing but hunting. He spies in the forest a splendid raven, and his arrow pierces its heart. The raven falls from the tree down upon a monument of

the whitest marble, sprinkling it in dying with its heart's blood. Immediately the whole forest shakes, and from a grotto a hideous monster emanates, denouncing on poor Millo this dreadful curse: If you do not find a wife, white as the marble of this monument, red as the blood of the raven, black as the raven's feathers, you must die in raving madness.—In vain are all researches for such a wife. The king's brother, Jennaro, who loves him tenderly, resolves not to rest until he has found the fair one, that is to save his brother from destroying madness. He roams over land and water, until at last, being advised by an old man experienced in witchcraft, he sees Armilla, the daughter of the mighty sorcerer, Norand. Her skin is white as the monument's marble, and red as the raven's blood, her hair and eyebrows are black as the raven's feathers. He succeeds in carrying her off, and, after having met with a heavy gale at sea, they land in the neighborhood of Frattombrosa.—Hardly has he put foot on shore, when he acquires by chance a splendid horse, and a falcon of the rarest qualifications. He is full of delight, that he cannot only save his brother, but gratify him moreover by presents of so much value to him. Jennaro sits down to rest in a tent which is spread for him under a tree, where he hears two pigeons that have perched on the boughs, saying; "Wo to thee, Jennaro, that thou art born! the falcon will pick out your brother's eyes; if you do not deliver it, or if you betray what you know, you will change to a statue. If your brother mounts the horse, it will kill him immediately; if you do not give it to him, or if you betray what you know, you will change to a statue. If Millo weds Armilla, he will be torn by a monster that very night; if you do not deliver Armilla to him, or if you betray what you know, you will change to a statue."—Norand appears, and confirms the words of the pigeons, it being the doom for carrying off Armilla.—In the moment that Millo sees Armilla, he is cured of the madness which had already seized him. The horse and the falcon are brought forward, and the king is charmed with them, and his brother's love, which flatters his favorite enjoyments by these splendid presents. Jennaro offers him the falcon, but when Millo is about to take it, he cuts his head off, and thus his brother's eyes are saved. In the same manner, when Millo has already his foot in the stirrup to mount the horse, Jennaro draws his sword, and cuts at one stroke both the horse's fore legs off, so that it falls. Millo is convinced that a secret love is the cause of these strange actions, and Armilla confirms this conjecture, for Jennaro's secret sighs and tears, his dis-

tracted and mysterious behavior, have long since excited her suspicion, that she might be the object of his love. She assures the king of her most tender affection for him, and which Jennaro had already kindled on their journey, by speaking of his brother in the warmest and most affectionate terms. She begs the king, in order to leave no room for suspecting her, to hasten the nuptials, to which he assents. Jennaro perceives the inevitable destruction of his brother; he is in despair to be thus misjudged, and yet a fearful doom awaits him; if but one word of the dreadful secret escapes his lips. He resolves to save his brother at all hazards, and penetrates, in the wedding night, by a subterranean passage, into the sleeping apartments of the king. A dreadful, fiery dragon appears; Jennaro attacks him, but his strokes avail nothing. The monster approaches the royal chamber; he grasps, in agony, the sword in both hands, and his mighty stroke, intended to kill the monster, cleaves the door. Millo comes out of his chamber, and, the monster having disappeared, he sees in his brother a wretch, whom the frenzy of a guilty love has incited to murder his brother. Jennaro can give no explanation; he is disarmed by the king's guards, and thrown into prison. He is condemned to suffer death for the deed of which he stands accused; but desires to see his dearly beloved brother before his death. Millo assents; Jennaro reminds him, in the most affecting words, of the mutual love, that had since their birth united them, and asks whether he thinks him capable of so black a deed? But Millo asks for proof of his innocence, when Jennaro, in great suffering, discovers the dreadful prophecies of the pigeons, and the sorcerer Norand. But, to Millo's horror, he stands, after having spoken the last words, changed to a marble statue. Millo now sees his brother's love, and torn by heart-rending remorse, he resolves no more to leave the statue of his beloved brother, but to die at its feet in repentance and despair. Norand appears, and says: "In the eternal book of fate, the death of the raven, thy curse, and the carrying off of Armilla were inscribed. 'There is but one deed that can restore your brother to life; but that deed is dreadful.—Armilla must die by this dagger, by the side of the statue, and, sprinkled by her blood, the cold marble will warm again. If you have the courage to murder Armilla, do it! Otherwise, mourn like myself!'"—He disappears. Armilla succeeds in wresting the secret of Norand's terrible words from the unhappy Millo, who leaves her in despair. Filled with horror, and sick of life, Armilla kills herself by the dagger, which Norand had left. Her blood, sprinkling the statue, calls Jennaro back into life.

Millo comes—he sees the brother revived, but his wife slain. In despair he is about to kill himself with the same dagger that killed Armilla. The dark prison suddenly changes into a wide brilliant saloon. Norand appears: the great, mysterious decision of fate is fulfilled, and all sorrows are ended; Armilla revives at the touch of Norand, and all ends well.

Ferdinand. I remember very well the beautiful, fanciful piece, and the deep impression which it made upon me. You are right, the wonderful appears here necessary, and so poetically true, that we willingly believe in it. Millo's deed, the killing of the raven, is that which strikes, as it were, at the middle gate of the realm of spirits; it opens, and the spirits step out into life, and involve men in that wonderful, mysterious fate, which rules over them.

Ludwig. True, and now consider the strong and fine situations which the poet has known how to draw from this conflict with the world of spirits. Jennaro's heroic sacrifice, Armilla's heroic deed—there is a greatness in them, of which our common moral drama manufacturers, who rake up the miseries of every-day life, like the dirt that is thrown from the saloon into the dirt cart, have no idea. How finely are the comic parts interwoven with the whole.

Ferdinand. Yes!—In the truly romantic drama alone, the comic intermingles so nicely with the tragic, that both contribute to give *one* effect to the whole, taking hold of the mind of the auditor in a peculiar, wonderful manner.

Ludwig. Our opera manufacturers themselves have had an indistinct feeling of it. And this feeling, probably, has produced the so-called heroic-comic operas, in which the heroic is often really comic, and the comic heroic, in so far it steps with a perfect heroism over all the bounds of good taste, delicacy and decency.

Ferdinand. By your description of a good opera text, we have but very few genuine operas.

Ludwig. And so we have but few!—The greater part of the so-called operas are merely empty plays with songs, and the total deficiency of dramatic effect, which is ascribed now to the poem, and then to the music, must be only attributed to the dead mass of scenes annexed to each other without an innate poetical connection, and without poetical truth; to such scenes music can give no life. Often the composer has involuntarily worked his own way, and the poem runs by the side of the music, without being able to assimilate itself to it. Such music may be very good, that is, it may excite a certain pleasant feeling, like a lively and brilliant display of colors,

without seizing, by its intrinsic depth, upon the hearer with magic power. The opera is thus made a concert, given on the stage, in costume, and with decorations.

Ferdinand. Since you thus admit only romantic operas in the strictest meaning of the word, what do you say to the musical tragedies, and above all the comic opera in the present costume? You will reject them entirely.

Ludwig. By no means!—In the greater part of the older tragic operas—they are neither written nor composed now as formerly—it is the heroic of their action, the intrinsic force of their characters and situations, which so powerfully affects the audience. The mysterious, dark power, which rules over gods and men, walks visibly before their eyes, and they hear announced in strange tones, the eternal, unchangeable counsels of fate, which governs even the gods. From these purely tragic subjects is excluded what is strictly fantastic; but in that connection with the gods, which rouses man to a higher life, to godly deeds, a higher language must be spoken, and that in the wonderful accents of music. By-the-by, were not the ancient tragedies recited musically? and did not this custom proclaim the necessity of a higher means of expression than common speech can give?—Our musical tragedies have inspired the composer of genius in a peculiar manner to a high, I might say, to a holy style, and it is, as though man walked, wonderfully initiated, on the tones, that spring from the golden harps of the cherubim and seraphim, into the realm of light, where the whole mystery of his being is laid open to him.—I mean to point out nothing less, Ferdinand, than the intimate relation between the church music and the tragic opera, for which the older composers formed a peculiar, grand style, of which the modern musicians have no idea, not even excepting Spontini, however rich and full he appears. I will not mention here our great Gluck, who stands like a hero; but to show, how even less talents conceived that truly great, tragic style, I will remind you of the chorus of the priests of the night in Piccini's *Dido*.

Ferdinand. I feel now as in the former golden days of our companionship; by speaking enthusiastically of your art, you elevate me to views which are new to me, and you may believe that I fancy this moment that I understand a good deal of music.—Nay, I believe, no good verse could spring up in my mind, without at once being clothed in tones and song.

[To be continued.]

AMATEUR CONCERTS.

FROM THE "HISTORY OF THE VIOLIN."

Amateur concerts are hardly caricatured in the subjoined *scena*, "being the description of a quartett, freely drawn from the French of an eminent living writer, whose lively and graphic powers in the delineation of familiar scenes have procured him very extensive admiration among his own countrymen, and some share of credit *parmi nous autres Anglais*. Here, then, is the exposition; but let imagination first draw up the curtain, and place us in view of the convened guests at a musical *soiree*, given by some people of middling condition, but somewhat ambitious pretensions, in a private apartment somewhere in Paris. After several hours of the evening had worn away in lengthened expectation, till the assembled party, tired of speculating and talking, began to yawn, the old gentleman who usually undertook the bass instrument was seen to look at his watch, and was heard to murmur between his teeth, 'What a bore is this? How am I to get home by eleven, if the time goes on in this do-nothing way; and I here since seven o'clock, too! So much for your early invitations; but they shan't catch me again.' At length the host, who had been passing the evening in running about to borrow instruments, and collect the 'disjecta membra' of the music reappears, with a scarlet countenance, and in the last state of perspiring exhaustion, his small and feeble figure tottering beneath the weight of sundry large music-books and a tenor fiddle. 'Here I am again,' exclaimed he, with an air that was rendered perfectly wild by his exertion; 'I've had a world of trouble to get the parts together; but I've managed the business. Gentlemen, you may commence the quartett.' 'Ay, ay,' said Mons. Pattier, the bass-fiddle man, 'let us begin at once, for we've no time to lose; but where's my part?' 'There, there, on the music-desk.' 'Come, gentlemen, now let us *tune*.' The constituent amateurs proceed according to the labor of getting into mutual agreement; during which process the auditory shuffle about, and insert themselves into seats as they can. Already are the yawning symptoms of impatience visible among the ladies, to whom the very mention of a quartett furnishes a pretence for the vapors, and who make no scruple to talk, for diversion's sake, with the loungers behind their chairs. Whispering, laughing, quizzing, are freely indulged in, and chiefly at the special expense of

the musical *executioners* themselves. The enterprising four, at length brought into unison, plant themselves severally before their desks. The elderly basso has stuck his circlet of green paper round the top of his candle for optical protection from the glare; the tenor has mounted his spectacles, the second violin has roughened his bow with a whole ounce of rosin; and the premier has adjusted his cravat so as to save his neck from too hard an encounter with his instrument. These preliminaries being arranged, and the host having obtained something like a 'lull' among the assembly, by dint of loud and repeated exclamations of 'hush!' the first violin elevates his ambitious bow-arm, directs a look of command to his colleagues, and stamps with his foot. 'Are we ready?' he inquires, with a determined air. 'I have been ready any time these two hours,' replied Mons. Pattier, with a malecontent shrug of his shoulders. 'Stay a moment, gentlemen,' cries second fiddle; 'my treble string is down; 'tis a new string; just let me bring it up to pitch again.' The tenor takes advantage of this interval to study a passage that he fears is likely to 'give him pause;' and the base takes a consolatory pinch of snuff. 'I've done it now,' ejaculates at length the second violin. 'That's well, then; attention again, gentlemen, if you please. Let us play the allegro very moderately, and the adagio rather fast, it improves the effect.' 'Ay, ay, just as you like it; only you must beat the time.' The signal is given; the first violin starts off, and the rest follow, after their peculiar fashion. It becomes presently evident that, instead of combination, all is contest; notwithstanding which evidence of honorable rivalry, somebody has the malice to whisper, pretty audibly, 'The rogues are in a conspiracy to flay our ears.' Presently the first violin makes a dead halt. 'There's some mistake, we're all wrong.' 'Why it seems to go well enough,' observes the tenor. 'No, no, we're out, somewhere.' 'Where is it, then?' 'Where? that's more than I can tell.'—'For my part,' says the second violin, 'I have not missed a note.' 'Nor I either.'—'Nor I.'—'Well, gentlemen, we must try back.' 'Ay, let us begin again; and pray be particular in beating the time.' 'Nay, I think I mark the time loud enough.' 'As for that,' exclaims the hostess, 'the person who lodges below has already talked about complaining to the landlord.' The business is now resumed, but with no improved success, although the first violin works away in an agitation not very dissimilar to that of a maniac. The company relax into laughter, and the performers come to a stand-still. 'This is

decidedly not the thing,' says the conducting violinist, Monsieur Longuet—'there is doubtless some error—let us look at the bass part. Why, here's a pretty affair—you are playing in B flat, and we are in D!' 'I only know that I have been playing what you told me, the first quartett in the first book,' replies old Monsieur Pattier, florid with rage. 'How the deuce is it then? let us see the title page. Why, how is this? a quartett of Mozart's, and we are playing one of Pleyel's! now really that is too good!' Renewed laughter is the result of this discovery, and the abortive attempt ends with a general merriment, the contagion of which, however, fails to touch old Monsieur Pattier, who can by no means turn into a joke his indignation at a mistake that has effectually put a stop to the performance of the quartett."

BIOGRAPHY.

CARL MARIA VON WEBER.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN FOR THE MUSICAL MAGAZINE.]

[Concluded from page 223.]

From 1813 to 1816 he conducted the opera in Prague, which he re-organized altogether; during this time he also composed the great cantata, "Conflict and Victory,"—a composition, imposing by its grand ideas, its fulness, and its brilliancy, but yet not showing a decided style of his own. Wrapped up entirely in his art, and living for it alone, he resigned his place in Prague, as soon as his object was effected, to bring the opera to a flourishing condition, and again he went out into the world free from any fixed situation. He stayed in 1816 for some time in the house of a distinguished amateur, where he wrote three of his most beautiful piano forte sonatas. Many, and advantageous, offers were made to him on all sides, but he refused them all, until a call was made from Dresden, for the purpose of creating a German opera. To this business he devoted from 1817, the best part of his activity. He earned, by his zeal and skill in it, the most universal acknowledgment, even from those who by that pride or caprice, so often found in artists, are generally prevented from acknowledging the merits of their brother artists. Among his compositions of that time, the following were the more prominent:

his Cantata for the Jubilee at the king of Saxony's fiftieth year of his government, the well known Jubel Overture, several cantatas on the occasion of marriages, and the extremely fine and well wrought mass for the birthday of the king, with an offertorium, and which was afterwards followed by a second mass.

Now he wrote the "*Freyschutz*," text by Kind, first brought out in 1821, in Berlin, and then spreading through the whole civilized world, and gaining for its composer a celebrity and popularity, which no other composer has since acquired. It is very little known, but well authenticated, that Weber took those melodies, which have mainly opened the way for this opera to all the large and small theatres in Europe, from a piano forte Concert of Böhner, the organist, a talented composer, who is now unfortunately buried and lost, in deep mental alienation. The unheard of success of the "*Freyschutz*," partly owing to the truly popular character of its melodies, and partly to the imposing scene in the wolf's crag, procured him the commission to compose a new opera for Vienna, for which Madame de Chezy wrote the text from an old French tale—the "*Euryanthe*." He worked on this opera from 1822 to the autumn of 1823; in the September of which latter year he went himself to Vienna, to bring it out. It was first represented on the 25th October; but its success was by far less complete than that of the *Freyschutz*. This was, however, by no means owing to the truly grand music, but solely to external circumstances, and to the weakness of the poem. In 1824, Weber received the order from London to compose the opera *Oberon* for the Covent Garden theatre; the text of the first act being at once transmitted to him. He prepared himself for it by seriously studying the English language. But the laborious duties of his office, (increased by the frequent absences of his colleague, Morlacchi, whose feeble health induced him to often repeated journeys to Italy,) in connection with his studies, caused his health to suffer, and he could not finish the opera so soon as was required, and as he himself desired. He spent the summer of 1825 in Ems, for the restoration of his health; from whence he went to Berlin, where he brought out his opera "*Euryanthe*" on the stage. His sufferings in the throat and chest increased in 1826; he worked, however, incessantly, on his "*Oberon*," until he had completed it, and in the February of that year, tearing himself away from his friends, who tried to dissuade him, he went to London, where he put the last finish on the "*Oberon*," and brought it out. But on the same day, on which his

"Freyschutz" was to have been given for his benefit, on the 5th of July, 1826, this warm-hearted man, this great artist, this faithful, loving husband, (who, even in the whirlpool of London, of which he was the centre, felt an indescribable longing for home, notwithstanding the most enthusiastic applause of the whole metropolis,) this pious christian, breathed his last, and passed in full faith, "as God pleases," to the regions of eternal peace. Being a Catholic he was solemnly buried in Moorfield's Chapel.

C. M. Von Weber has made an epoch in dramatical composition, although his works of that kind number but few; he has created much that was new; his instrumentation has a singularly deep effect, and he has elevated the popular songs of his country. The songs of the spirits in his "Oberon," are among the best and most characteristic representations, that have ever been given by music. It is a great loss to the musical world that he has not completed his comic opera, "The Three Pinto's," text by Theodor Hell, at which he worked for several years.

Weber combined in his person the most brilliant and varied qualities; he was not only one of the most original composers, a great virtuoso, who developed in his play, especially in his later period, many new and original points, a director as fiery as he was circumspect and ingenious, a theoretician everywhere at home, as well in the æsthetic as in the grammatical parts of his art, but he was also a man of the most refined and cultivated mind, taking a higher standard in life, and looking on life from a higher standard than most artists are apt to do. His numerous articles and essays, which have appeared, generally anonymous, in great numbers in the different periodicals, on subjects connected with his art, give evidence of this; as also his wonderful musical productions, which know how to charm and delight the ear, without sacrificing æsthetic truth; and, *vice versa*, to keep the latter sacred, without entirely sacrificing to this higher, holier part of his art, that which is more earthly; without giving up and abandoning the charms of sweet melody, as though to please the ear were evil. And this is, in fact, the distinguishing characteristic of our Weber, (first appearing clear and predominating in his Freyschutz,) that his compositions everywhere combine truth in their expression with the most pleasant gracefulness of fluent, and even popular melodies, and with the charms of the sweetest harmonies. This union, this simultaneous gratification of the two demands, made on music, that of our soul, and that of

our senses, this true utile dulci, is evidently the talisman, by which Weber succeeded, not only to take our hearts at the first hearing of his compositions, but also to keep us spell-bound the more intimately we get acquainted with them; and thus to give proof not only that the great public may be gained by not neglecting what is higher in the art, but that this is the best way to keep them interested.

Besides the works we have mentioned, a great many others have been published, consisting of a great variety of instrumental pieces, especially for concerted instruments, and calculated for accomplished performers, such as, Concerts, Concertino's, Potpourri's, and so forth, for pianoforte, clarinet, bassoon, horn, violoncello, sonatas, variations, polaccas and dances, a clarinet quintetto, and several symphonies. We have also vocal compositions, several cantatas, concert airs, vocal quartettos, songs, with pianoforte accompaniment, among which is the Collection of Korner's "Lyre and Sword," which was very favorably received, and shows everywhere the poetic and dramatic composer.

The literary fragments communicated in Kind's "Muses," in which Weber gives his views and his experience under the caption of "Artist's Life," are very interesting. His friend Theodor Hell collected his miscellaneous writings, and published them under the title "Posthumous Writings of C. M. Von Weber," in two volumes, and the Schlesingers in Berlin have announced a new collection of his posthumous papers. This collection, and a series of Essays, and Letters by him and on him, in the "Caecilia," furnish rich materials for an extended biography. When the news of his death came to Germany, benefit representations in theatres, and concerts, were given, and thus a fund was collected for the education of his children.

LECTURES ON MUSIC.

We noticed in a previous number, among the encouraging signs of the times, that more interest seemed to be taken in lectures on music. Evidence of this growing interest continues to be given.

We have now two abstracts before us of such lectures; the first by Mr. Geo. Hood, delivered before the members of the congregation

in Philadelphia, whose choir he leads; the second by Mr. G. W. Lucas, delivered at Cambridge, Washington County, New York.

The first puts music within every body's reach, by proving that all persons can learn to sing; the second puts the mastership in the art out of the reach of a majority among us, by enumerating the many different qualifications which are required; and both are right. The action of the vocal organs is so nearly alike in singing and speaking, that even the first physiologists and professors in Acoustics, have not yet been able to give sufficient explanation of the cause of the disturbance in its vibrations, which distinguishes the speaking from the singing tone. As far as regards the vocal organs, therefore, all can learn to sing whose organs have not decidedly a natural defect, which would equally prevent them from speaking; nay, even slight defects, such as stammering, lisping, may be greatly improved by a judicious study in singing; and especially a rough or a hoarse voice may be greatly smoothed and mellowed. A musical ear, however weak it may naturally be, may also be acquired under the guidance of a correct and faithful teacher, by continued mental study. The mind must be active in it, by continually recalling the correct tone, by continually comparing it, when given by the teacher with that which the pupil himself produces, and thus fastening it upon the mind. Thus all can learn to *sing* at least, if all cannot find time and the means to learn to *play on an instrument*; and one way is therefore open in which all can actively take part in music.

Music is given for all. Man's dull understanding, pressed down by the earthly dross, can have no idea of the blissful enjoyment which awaits him in heaven; no mind can reach so high as to imagine it, no language suffice to describe it; therefore the benignant Creator, who wanted to give his creatures a foretaste of the joys of heaven, gave them the art of music. Where language fails, there only begins its full sway, making us forget our present frailties of body and soul. How else comes it, that, if we give ourselves fully up to the influence of the art, letting the soul and feelings predominate over the mind and understanding, it conjures up before our imaginations the most happy, and, at the same time, the most innocent moments of our life? The imagination soars from these happy moments to a still higher flight; it foretastes the reality of still greater happiness.

Therefore our Creator made his heavenly gift so that its influence extends over all creation; that its higher, divine power is accessible to all men, who are not yet entirely lost to a recollection of any happy,

innocent hour; and not only that all men can feel its influence, but that they can actively participate in it. On the other hand, the art shows its divine origin, by its infiniteness. No musician has yet lived, except it be one, that had not music, but only his own vanity at heart, that has not had within himself the experience, that the more insight he acquired into the art, the more vast the field opened and extended before him. Beethoven himself, the greatest master spirit which the art has yet produced, gives the most striking example of it. All his latest compositions give ample evidence of an eager pressing forward to new and higher spheres, of new conceptions dawning upon his soul, in short of a struggle to express and bring to a definite form, what his soul felt. Another proof of this, and of the divine origin of the art is, that almost all the great composers, when the treasures of the art had fully opened upon them, when they had collected experience in their science, have turned to the praise of their Creator, to sacred music, as to the highest object of their creative power, there to interpret and reveal to man the word of God. Thus, we see the last masses of Beethoven, of Romberg, of Mozart—we see Spohr, Mendelssohn, and many others, all turning to sacred music.

A professor of music, a teacher of the art, therefore, engages in a holy cause. Let him prepare well for it; let him study first of all the science of music, seriously and thoroughly; for if to himself the revelations of the great men, whom God has inspired, to charm the world with song and symphony, are utter mysteries, how will he introduce others to them? Let him, therefore, study the science in all its branches, and study it in the works of the masters; let him thoroughly examine how they used the external means of the art as their means of expression. But the master of music must not forget in his study of the science and practice of the art, the general cultivation of his mind; for if the saying be true, show me an illiterate man and I will show you a coarse man; then the musician, above all, should be well read; for he, who is fully to enter into the spirit of the noblest creations of the art, should not neglect any means to elevate his mind, and to refine his feelings.

We fully concur with the lecturer in the opinion that instrumental music should not be omitted in the church service. Of the two branches of the art, vocal and instrumental music, the latter is undoubtedly the higher branch; it is the most purely musical; it has the most unalloyed, legitimate effect upon that part of our being, for

which the art is intended, upon our soul. Articulate words are but the earthly dress for our thoughts and feelings. Hemmed in by this earthly body we cannot communicate them to each other, except by means of words; nay, we can have no distinct thoughts without their presenting themselves to our own mind in words. But thoughts are not the object of music; it is not that inferior part of spiritual man, the understanding, that is to be affected by it, it is the higher part, his living soul. Instrumental music has power to reach the soul; if it really expresses what the composer felt. This, however, is the great difficulty. It requires first that the composer should have been really inspired, that he should succeed in giving his music a distinct character, in making it a whole beyond the mere collection and combination of sweet melodies. Such compositions are the great symphonies of a Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, or of many others. Take, for instance, the grand powerful symphony of Mozart in D, what a distinct triumphal character is in it; take, on the other hand, his restless symphony in G minor; how different and equally characteristic, equally distinctly affecting our souls. Take Beethoven's ninth symphony. As if to show the feelings under which he composed his symphony, to the poor, limited understanding of man, he takes up in the finale Schiller's Ode to Joy, carrying it out in a mighty chorus. But instrumental music requires secondly, that the spirit in which the composer conceived it should not be lost in the execution; that the performers should not only be able to play the notes with ease and correctness, but that they should, one and all, fully enter into that spirit.

In this view of the art, we think, that instrumental music, conceived and performed in the proper spirit, is eminently adapted to fulfil the object of the introduction of music into public worship, that is, to prepare and open the heart for the influence of the word of God; and we for ourselves must confess, that a good, truly sacred organ prelude, is to us the most effective preparation for divine service.

But the public mind is yet very little prepared for such views of the art, and we would, therefore, say to all who feel the power within themselves: Continue to shed light on the subject; induce the people to think about the art; elevate their conception of it; and we would encourage our lecturers especially to go on in their good work; in the end they will receive the thanks of the public for their exertions.